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LETTER DATED 18 JUNE 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 18 June 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the temporary nature of the oil-for-food programme.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-17253 (E) 180698 180698

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Annex

Letter dated 18 June 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should like to inform you of Iraq's position on the draft resolution concerning the oil-for-food programme, which was submitted on 17 June 1998 by the United Kingdom, Sweden and Portugal for adoption by the Security Council.

The draft resolution submitted to the Council contradicts the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Government of Iraq and the Secretariat of the United Nations in that it ignores the fact that this programme is an exceptional and temporary agreement, as stipulated in paragraph 4 of the Memorandum. Similarly, the third preambular paragraph of Security Council resolution 986 (1995), which served as the basis for negotiations between Iraq and the Secretariat on the conclusion of the Memorandum, provides that this programme was intended as a temporary measure until the Council took further action with regard to the prohibitions referred to in resolution 661 (1990).

The Government of Iraq is surprised that certain members of the Council are intent on adopting the draft resolution, even though implementation of phase IV of the purchase and distribution plan began on 30 March 1998 and there is no longer any justification for adopting a new resolution on the subject. The efforts of some States to amend the draft will in no way alter the substance of the matter.

Moreover, Iraq has clearly fulfilled its obligations under section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the implementation of paragraph 22 of that resolution is now an urgent and overdue matter that cannot be disregarded by the Security Council in the light of the positive developments in Iraq's relationship with the Security Council and the Special Commission, the most apparent aspect of which was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary-General on 23 February 1998 and the agreement on the agenda for the next two months with the Chairman of the Special Commission on 14 June 1998. To change the oil-for-food programme from a temporary measure into a lasting and permanent arrangement based on the provisions of the draft resolution submitted to the Council is therefore completely unacceptable to Iraq.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq categorically rejects this attempt to turn the Memorandum of Understanding and the purchase and distribution plan into a permanent measure, and it strenuously urges that for phase IV of the purchase and distribution plan approved by the Secretary-General on 29 March 1998 should be the final six months of its operation in accordance with the oil-for-food programme in the light of Iraq's fulfilment of section C of resolution 687 (1991), in which case it is incumbent on the Council to apply paragraph 22 of that resolution forthwith.

I should be grateful if you would inform the members of the Council of this letter and have it circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs of
the Republic of Iraq